2020-2022

Anthology of Literary and Visual Arts

38 Artists and Writers

Ray Seebeck et al.

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Born To Be Blue by Jacqueline Augenbraun

Born to Be Blue by Jacqueline Augenbraun

Dunes at Nauset Beach, Cape Cod National Seashore

CAPE COD NATIONAL SEASHORE
Location—Eastern Massachusetts
Size—27,000 acres
Mammals—Muskrat, mink
Birdlife—Geese, ducks, gulls, terns, shorebirds, songbirds, depending upon the season
Plantlife—Dune vegetation, pinelands, hardwoods, white cedar swamp

Comprising most of the eastern shore of Cape Cod, the area includes parts of the towns of Orleans, Chatham, Eastham, Wellfleet, Truro, and Provincetown. This portion of the Cape is a terminal moraine, the southernmost boundary of a glacier. The bluffs along the ocean afford a superb view over the Atlantic.

Accommodations—In any of the Cape towns
Headquarters—Eastham

Born to Be Blue by Jacqueline Augenbraun

I’m on Fire (III), 60 inch x 50 inch, Oil on Canvas by Christian Bañez

I’m on Fire (II) 48 inch x 36 inch, Oil on Canvas by Christian Bañez

Mahal ya kita_i think I love you 24 inch x 18 inch, Oil on Canvas by Christian Bañez

Shelton McMurphy Johnson House Linocut Print, Oil-based Ink 2021 by Mireille Blond

Bonnie Dell Linocut Print, Oil-based Ink 2021 by Mireille Blond

Return by Keenan Boscoe

Strewn by Keenan Boscoe

Weave by Keenan Boscoe

Deposit by Keenan Boscoe

Squall by Sharone Conteh-Morgan

Reflections by Sharone Conteh-Morgan

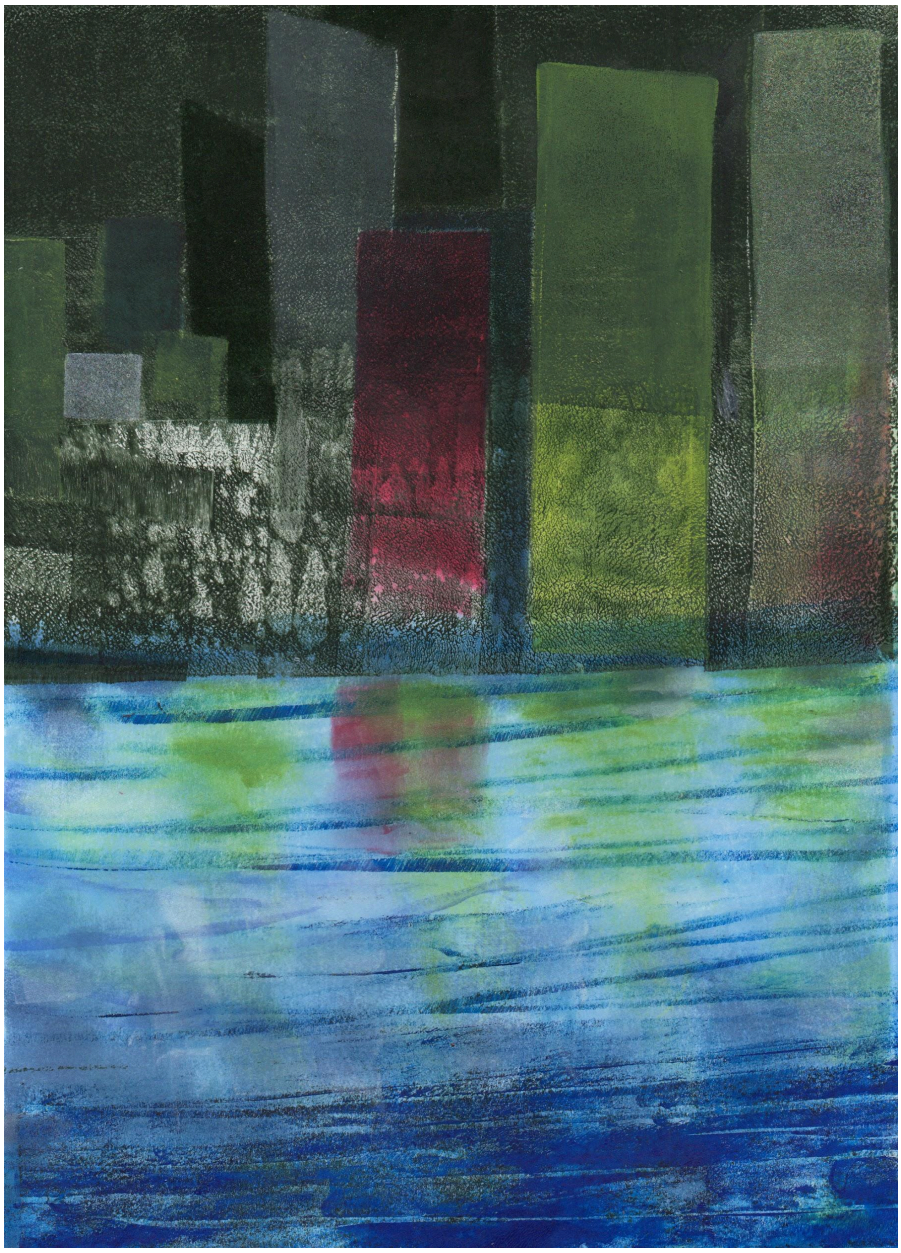
Rising Tide by Sharone Conteh-Morgan

The Harrowing Journey for Asylum by Sharone Conteh-Morgan

Swell by Sharone Conteh-Morgan

City In The Morning, Gel plate, foam plates, acrylics, oil based inks on Bristol by Sharone Conteh-Morgan

City At Night, Gel plate, foam plates, synthetic rubber impressions, acrylic, oil based inks on Bristol by Sharone Conteh-Morgan

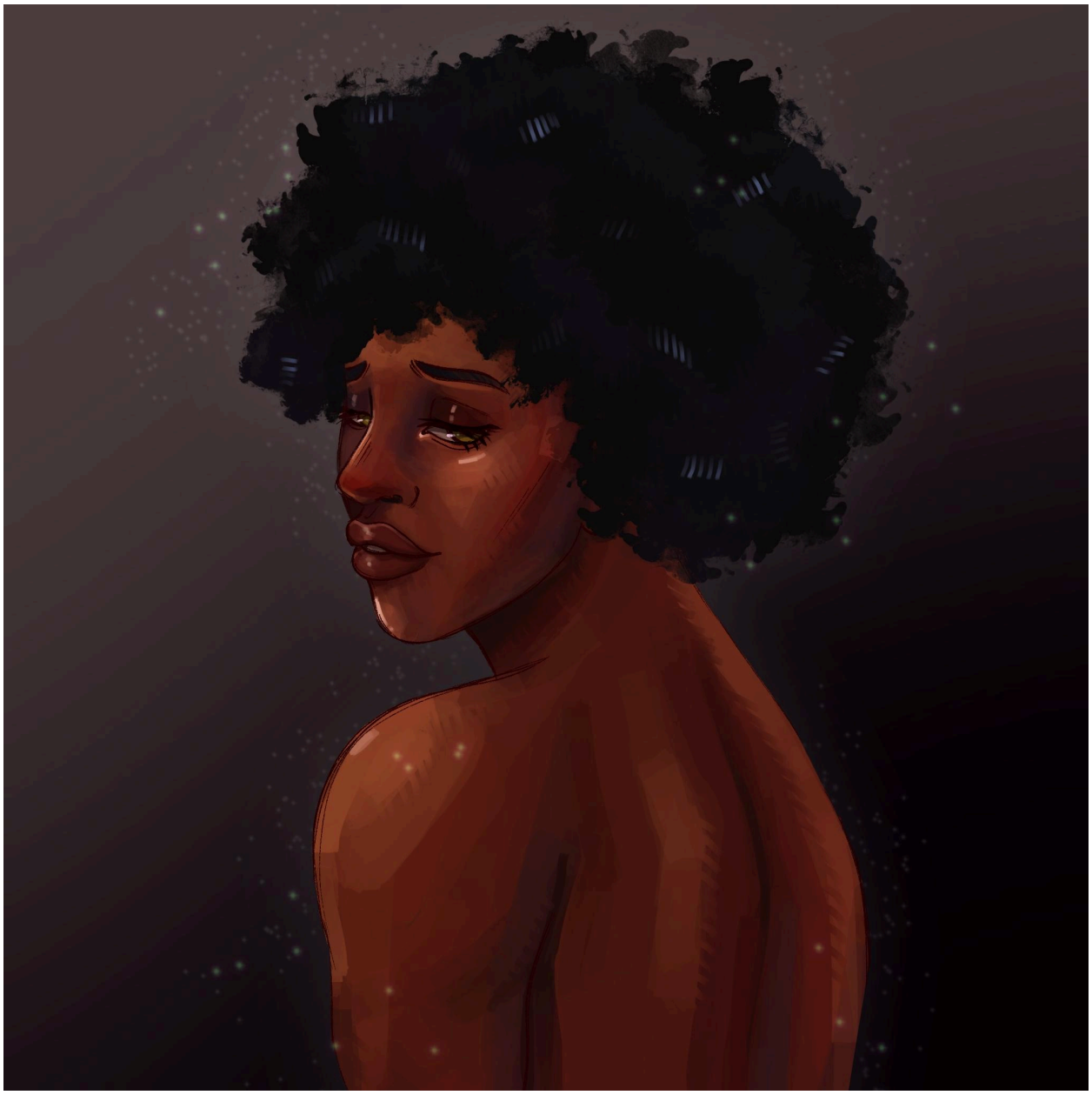


City From The Water, Gel plate, foam plates, acrylic, oil based inks on Bristol by Sharone Conteh-Morgan

Landscape of a corn maze 03, 2021- cyanotype on watercolour paper by Kalven Duncan

Landscape of a corn maze 02, 2021- cyanotype on watercolour paper by Kalven Duncan

“Vivid Dream” 24 x 54 in. oil pastel on paper by Nadeige Fontaine



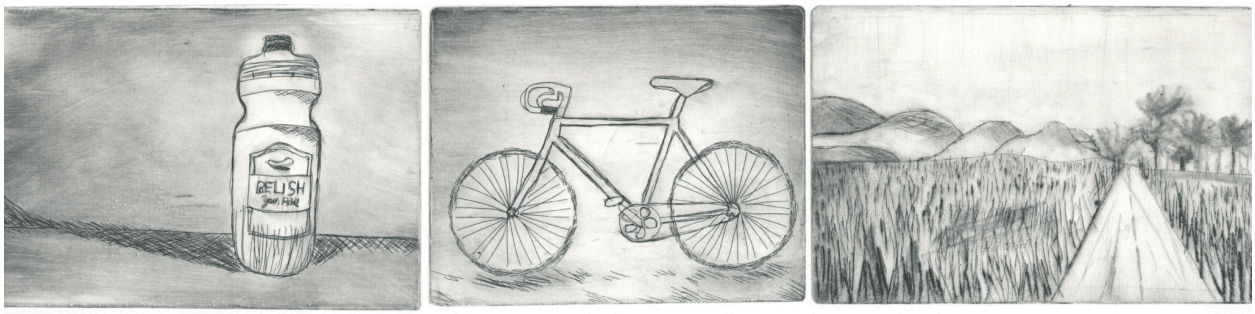
“Woman Nowhere” digital artwork by Nadeige Fontaine

Starburst Sky by Quincy Gregg

Take Off by Quincy Gregg

Pup Time by Quincy Gregg

It’s All Water Under the Bridge by Quincy Gregg



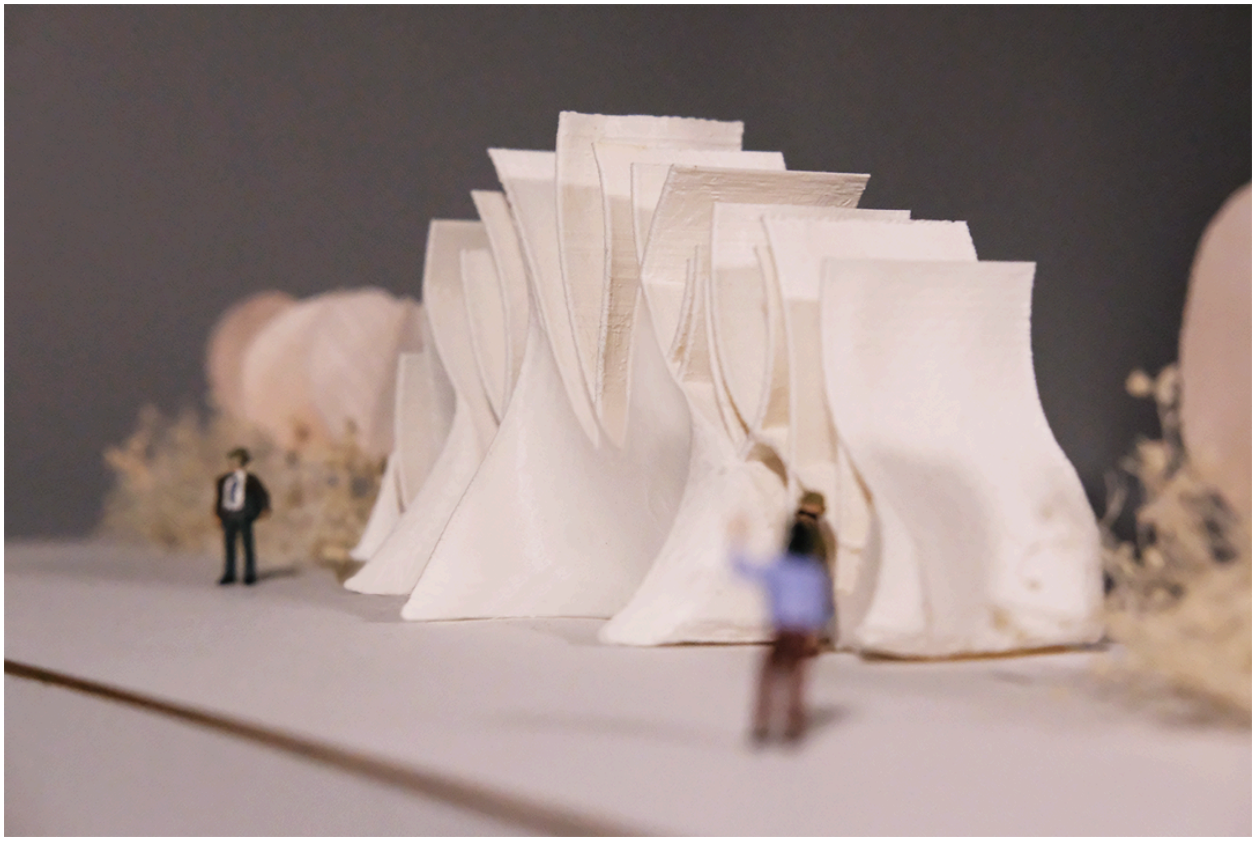
South Bay Summers triptych, intaglio print on paper by Kimberly Ha

South Bay Summers, intaglio print on paper by Kimberly Ha

San Diego Sunset by Julia Hagen

City in the Clouds by Julia Hagen

Pathways by Hannah Hwang



606 Public Bathroom by Hannah Hwang

Human Man by Cristiaan Jackson

He is like when the ***clouds*** **p a r t** to reveal the ***sun*** after the ***rain.***
Something **b r i g h t** in the ***pool*** of ***darkness.***
The one **s p a r k** that gets the ***fire*** to ***light.***

He **h o l d s** up the ***pillars*** that knocked me down and
b u i l d s a ***castle*** much **s t r o n g e r** and more **e l e g a n t** than the last.
This ***castle*** is a **s h i e l d** that **f i g h t s** against the terrible ***winds.***

He has a **g e n t l e** voice yet it can **p i e r c e** through ***thunder.***
His words **s i n k** deep into the ***foundation*** of the earth and
s p r e a d s from the ***land*** to the ***water*** and **s c a t t e r s** throughout the ***air.***

He has many **t a l e n t s** that not every being can possess.
Like he can make ***magical music*** with his ***body*** and
t r a n s f o r m plain text into ***lyrics*** that **i n f u s e s** into the ***mind.***

He **g a z e s** with eyes that hold ***desires.***
These ***desires*** can be easily met if I can match his strength.
His eyes **s e a r c h** for the last ***berry*** on the bush in **h o p e** that it's still ***sweet.***

He is a ***human man*** with his ***chest*** **c r a c k e d** open and
the ***innards*** are **r i c h** and **r e d** like the *KISS I PLANT ON HIS LIPS.*
No one can be as **v u l n e r a b l e** as this ***human man.***

To Become a Man by Cristiaan Jackson

I THINK I'M A LITTLE ***O B S E S S E D***
WITH SOME SORT OF BEING UNLIKE MYSELF
WITH SOME SORT OF BEING I'VE BEEN MISTAKEN FOR

THEIR BODY IS FAR MORE ***S U P E R I O R***
THE WAY IT TIGHTENS WITH THE FRUSTRATIONS OF THEIR INSIDES

THEIR MIND CAN GO COMPLETELY ***B L A N K***
AND FOCUS ON THE WHITE SPECK SMOTHERED BY THE BLACK BLUR

THEIR STANCE IS ***S T U R D Y*** AND ***S T R O N G***
LIKE A TREE WITH A VIEW ABOVE ALL

THEIR VOICE IS ***L O W*** AND ***S O F T***
IT SURROUNDS MY BODY LIKE A SOFT WARM BLANKET

I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS BUT I'M ***O B S E S S E D***
IF I CAN'T POSSESS THIS BEING, THEN I'LL **BE THE BEING**
I WON'T BE AS INTRIGUING
I WON'T HAVE THE SAME EFFECT ON PEOPLE
BUT IT'LL MAKE FOR A GREAT ILLUSION
T O B E C O M E A M A N

I'm Just a Woman or Whatever by Cristiaan Jackson

I DON'T wish I was a man.

I DON'T think I'm stuck in the wrong body.

I'm very much "feminine"

BUT

I'm just NOT a **delicate flower.**

I'm definitely NOT **dainty.**

I'm NOT a **smooth** and **hairless goddess.**

I'm losing my innocence and

NOTHING about me is **tiny** and **sweet**

BUT

I DON'T preach about my vagina to everyone

I'm NOT trying to flash my nips all over the internet

(do that if it's your thing)

a n d c o n t r o v e r s i a l l y

I love it when people hold my door

I'm a broke bitch so you can definitely pay the bill

BUT

I'm NO **sugar baby**

(I'm not that lucky)

I'm NOT a **slut**, or a **whore**, or a **skank** or a **thot**, or whatever the kids say

(if this is you, I don't judge)

I'M JUST KIND OF DONE WITH THE LABELS

I'M SICK OF THESE WEIRD DESCRIPTORS AND CATEGORIES AND SYSTEMS OF DIVISION

I never thought it would be so difficult . . . **J U S T T O B E**

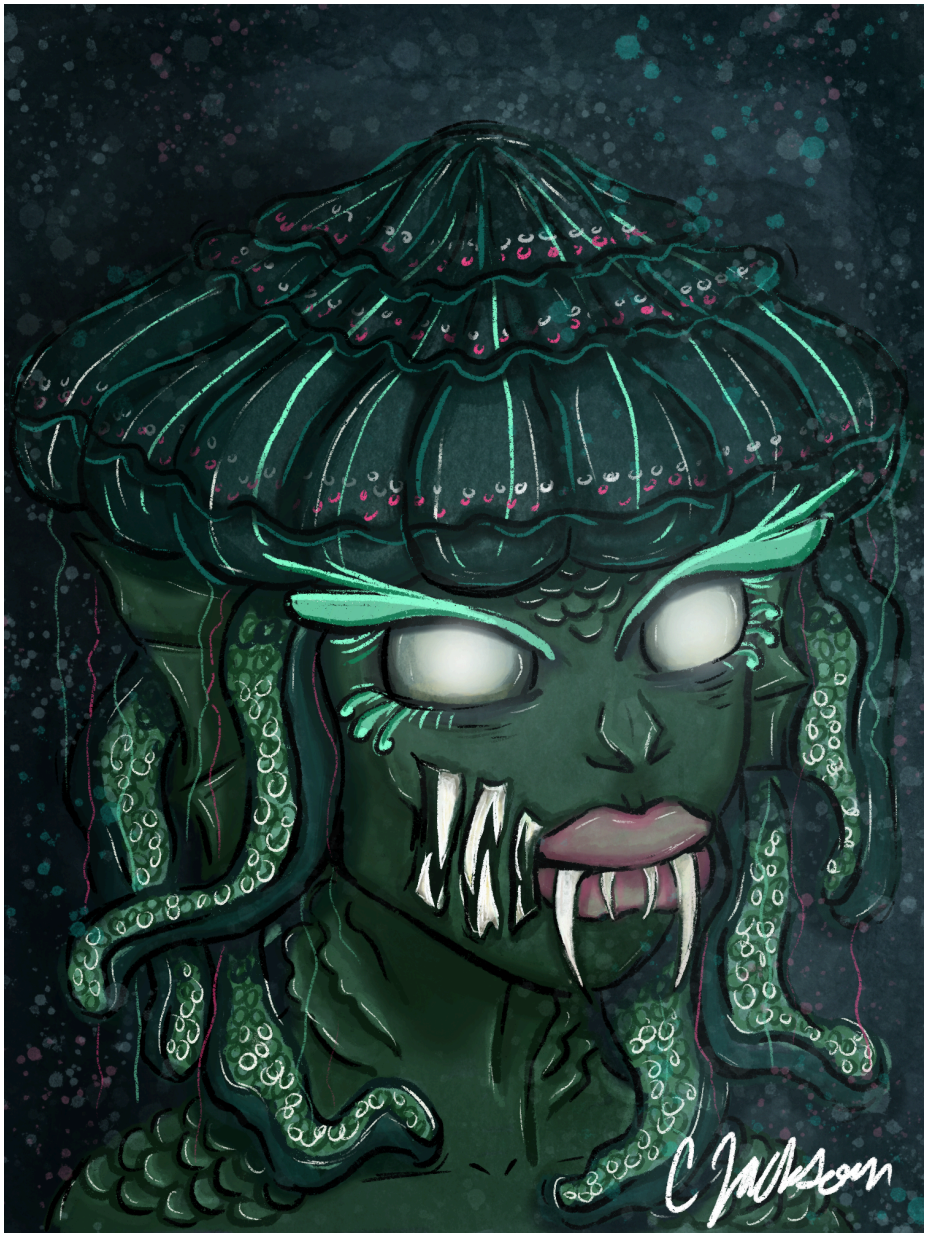
I hate the idea of making a statement . . .

Maybe I meant to say I hate defining myself, because it's such a waste of breath

BUT

here I am . . . saying things . . . and explaining myself

The point is: I'm just a woman or whatever



Mermaid by Cristiaan Jackson

THALASSOPHOBIA

THERE IS A TINY ROOM IN MY SUBCONSCIOUS.
HERE LIES A CEILING, FOUR WALLS, AND AN OLD WOODEN FLOOR.
A SHADOWY FIGURE APPEARS OCCASIONALLY,
LEAVING A POOL OF STRANGE FLUID BEHIND.
A STEAMY FOAM BUBBLES TO THE SURFACE.
SUDDENLY, THE LIQUID EXPANDS AND FILLS THE ROOM,
SUBMERGING THE DARK FIGURE BENEATH.
ONCE THE FORM IS FULLY CLOAKED, IT
PADDLES TOWARDS ME,
HURLING ITS BODY QUICKLY THROUGH THE SEA OF FROTH.
OUT OF NOWHERE, I SEE ITS GLOWING EYES,
BEAMING THROUGH THE DARKNESS.
I'M PARALYZED WITH TERROR
AND THERE IS NOWHERE TO ESCAPE THE DEPTHS OF MY MIND.

– CRISTIAAN JACKSON

Stained from a Grave Injury

For a long time I was submerged in misery.
I felt like a soggy plastic bag tugged along by the wind,
too numb to realize I'd been stained from a grave injury.

Darkness follows those with a unbalanced history.
But they'll never consume those that are thick-skinned.
For a long time I was submerged in misery.

I naively waited for anyone to display their chivalry.
Though I had been repeatedly let down, I grinned,
too numb to realize I'd been stained from a grave injury.

Life is chaotic and chaos wins an easy victory.
They had me grasping at nothing, confused by everything, and convinced I've sinned.
For a long time I was submerged in misery.

I never wanted to play along with life and their trickery.
I believed them when they told me all I needed was to be disciplined,
too numb to realize I'd been stained from a grave injury

Then and now aren't vastly different yet mildly contradictory.
I do feel complacent with who I've become and even so their is still more of me to be thinned.
For a long time I was submerged in misery,
too numb to realize I'd been stained from a grave injury.

– Cristiaan Jackson

“Ocean Passage” by Kira Jackson

I have an irrational fear of sea monsters. I’m TERRIFIED of the dark. So therefore looking into the endless, deep, dark, eerie abyss of the ocean at night always made me feel completely unsettled. Getting close and looking right into the mysterious void inevitably sent my nervous system into complete fight or flight mode.

If I’m scared of something, I have to face it. That’s just who I am. There’s no growth from wading in shallow waters, lingering in comfort zones.

I sat alone at the edge of the ocean in the complete dark, with only sprinkles of moonlight radiating over the waves. Over time, the fight or flight panic I felt, turned to neutrality, turned to calm, turned into feeling connected and intuitive, and then that's when I felt called into the water.

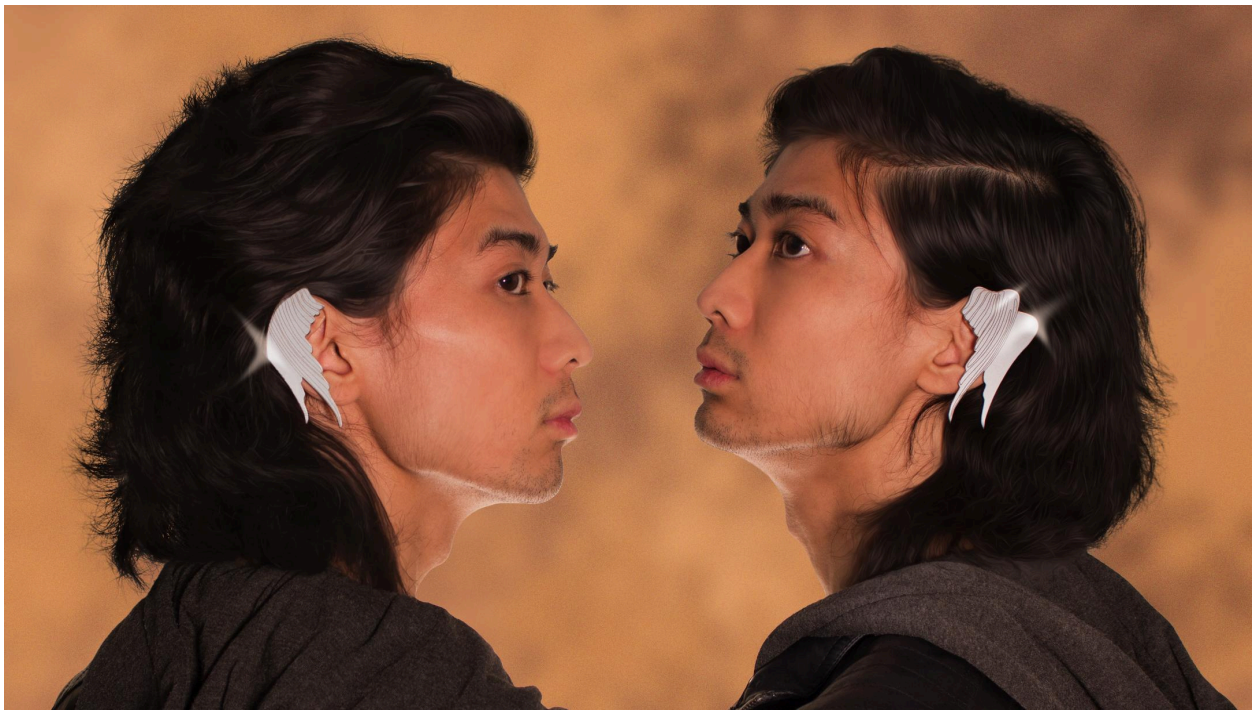
My night swims were grounding, spiritually cleansing, comforting. It felt like mother earth was caressing me in the form of the ocean water. I felt her acknowledge my presence in the form of her moonlight painting my wet skin while I floated on my back in the seawater looking out into the cosmos.

It’s transformative to master sitting in the still. To listen, feel, be one with the elements. Being reminded of who I am, and realizing how interconnected my soul is with Mother Earth.

The fear of looking out into the abyss was because I was unsettled by the unknown. The way the ocean looked dark and endless at night, almost like a vortex or a black hole, made me feel small and vulnerable in a world that extends far beyond what we perceive.

But now, nothing feels more grounding, then to sit at the edge of the water, get lost in the endlessness, and to just be.

Ungodly Hour Wings by Sun Kawazoe



Ungodly Hour Wings (wide) by Sun Kawazoe

Tui & La, Sun Kawazoe

Ego. 2021. Cement on canvas. 12 x 12 by Tae Kim

TAE JUNG. 2021. Cement on canvas. 20 x 16 by Tae Kim

Cross. 2021. Cement and pigment on canvas. 20 x 16 by Tae Kim

“View from the Hometown Bridge” by Ben Kim Paplham

If you’re lucky you’ll see the ice fishers,
first winter frost round holes. No nets,
wooden vessels, strings entrenched
frozen bodies, tents pitched, sons in thick fleece
rubber boots sending out their hooks, returning
kill, time dry, hunter’s need, silence
in cloven concert of night, sunburst
birds perched on the bow.

My uncle once showed us, the Fox
guiding our destination, wind down
the shore, beyond the bridge’s sight, is where
they built some shiny new home, five
swimming pools, four they don’t use.

To my north, the old paper mill
where, on crisp red spring morning drivings,
school, the west side of town,
hot smoke mingles with the birds.

Green domed stronghold, green bricked spire
church without celebrity, red tipped mounts.
Little blue house on the old bridge, torn down, notice
sign “Keep 500 feet distance” or the Fox’s will
sweeping you cross Wisconsin, into the Mississippi
churning flood, ice froth overflowing.

Ships rolling through “Restricted” red
letters on “this point” buoys. People, still,
restless on the edge, where they cut
off the center vein, the bridge’s swell.

Untitled (An Eroded Chasm) by Grace Tenneh Kromah

Encounter
Samantha Laite

With so many people in the world
I can’t help thinking maybe one day you and I will meet.

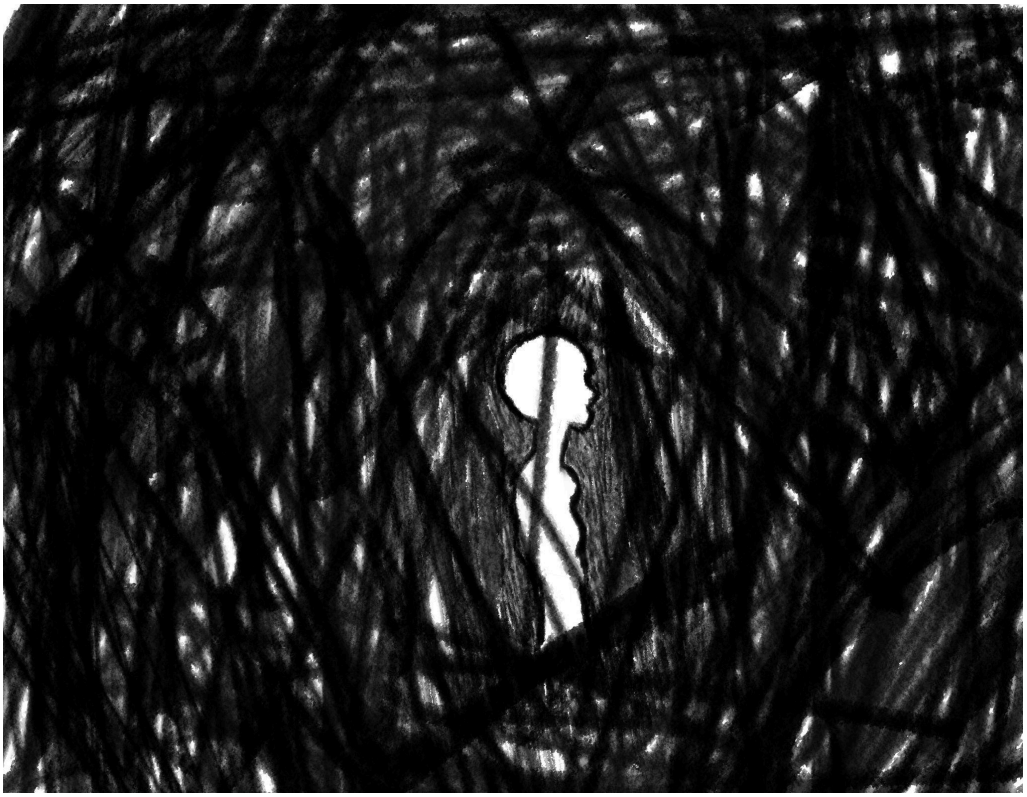
If that day comes maybe we will look enough
That we remember each other.

surroundings
Samantha Laite

We create our own dark surroundings to become lost in.
Looking from the outside - escape is easy.

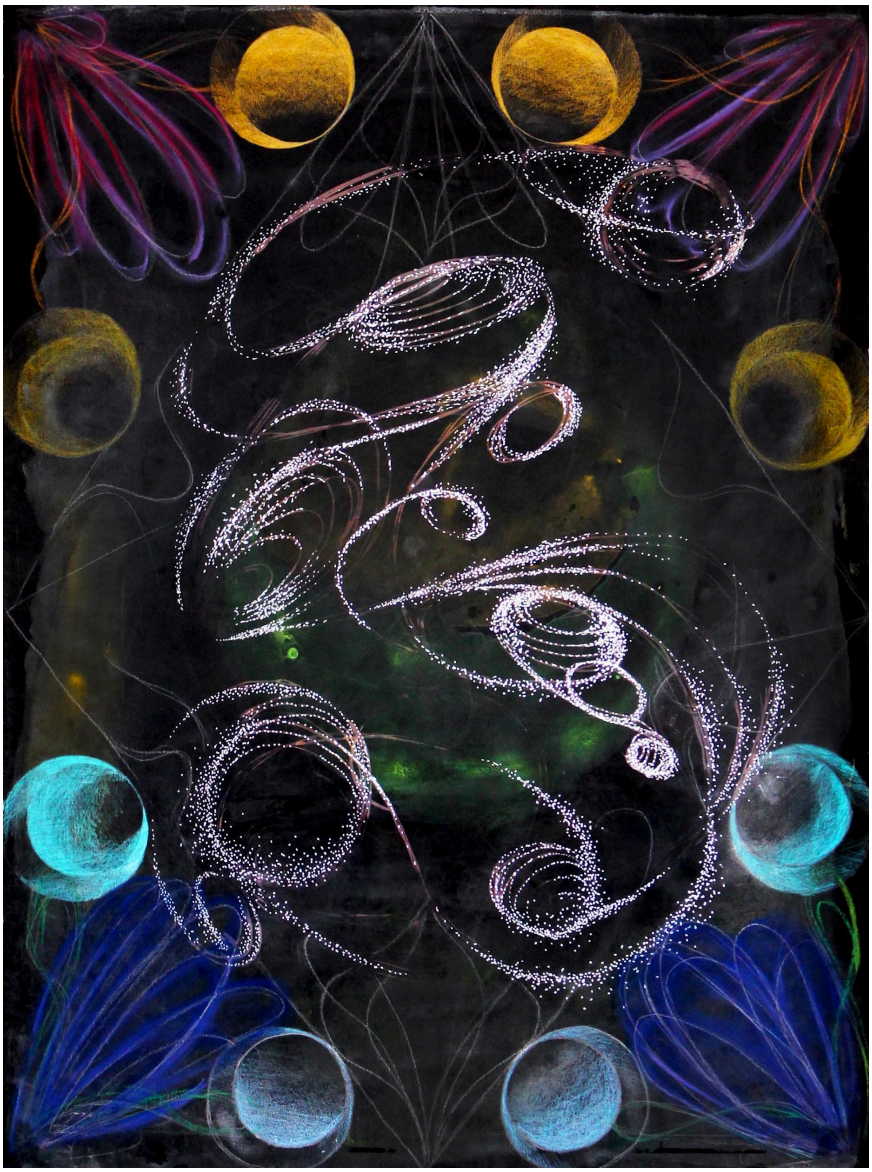
From within there’s no way out.

No understanding.
No rational thoughts.
We enter the darkened room of our own making.



“hands.” Digital Artwork by Samantha Laite

American Goldfinch by Freddie Lambright III



Jazz Man by Freddie Lambright III

Untitled (Red Ground Blue Lines) by Freddie Lambright III

“Where is Home “ 30x 36 inches Acrylic & oil pastel on paper by Braimah Temtayo Lawal

“Choco Milo” 30x44 inches Acrylic & oil pastel on paper by Braimah Temitayo Lawal

“The Cowboy” 16 x 20 inches Acrylic & oil pastel on canvas by Braimah Temitayo Lawal

Afterglow by Esther Mathieu

The hours pass, a moth climbs slowly
up my arm.
In the park a streetlamp
strobes from white to orange to pink, its
bulb dying.
In each direction, luminosity snags me
loose disciple, undisciplined, inert.
My face is itching, my
arm, ankle, tender back of my thigh.
Every conversation on my phone is
stalled out – in each case I or someone
else
turns away our face toward blank wall,
counts irregularities in the texture.
I cannot reach my fingers
to push from within against the soft
clay of my own exterior – it's too far,
and
all this barrier in here,
made of all this empty space.

in the meantime by Esther Mathieu

evenings we migrate
to the roof like
pilgrims, like metal
filings to magnetic
pole.
We sit on the lip
where our building
connects to the next
one–
you can walk the whole
block this way,
small steps up and down,
never meet a stranger or set foot upon the ground.
The red brick of the school on
Harman blocks
a central segment of the
skyline,
the final dip of the sun on
its way down.
But the buildings rise like
teeth around it,
the colors of the sky play out
against its bulk.
We watch our neighbors, drawn
up likewise –
they seem small and
irretrievable, far
away.
The air is crisper
without our masks,
sharp and almost
flavored.
We loop our arms around our knees
and burn a little,
let the light drop in low increments,
wonder about becoming stranded,
as on an island,
nothing around but miles of sky.

***111* by Esther Mathieu**

Back out again
I keep missing months:
when my mother says it's almost spring;
when I think of lost Christmas.
Time has come unreeled
from its smooth teeth,
floats unregistered over
sand, over ocean.

The hospital is in my
chest like a bloody stone,
turning over and over.
I can feel it eroding the soft shores of
my inmost topography canyons
wrought between my
lungs, my ribs.

I am in the dark tonight,
the jaws
around
me sharp,
vast,
glinting
in the
little
moonligh
t.
I am gnawing at my cuticles but not bleeding.

The ritual of these
days is like a
sedative; their slow
passage, the
sameness of them.
As I parse my way
through them I feel
salvaged, dry.

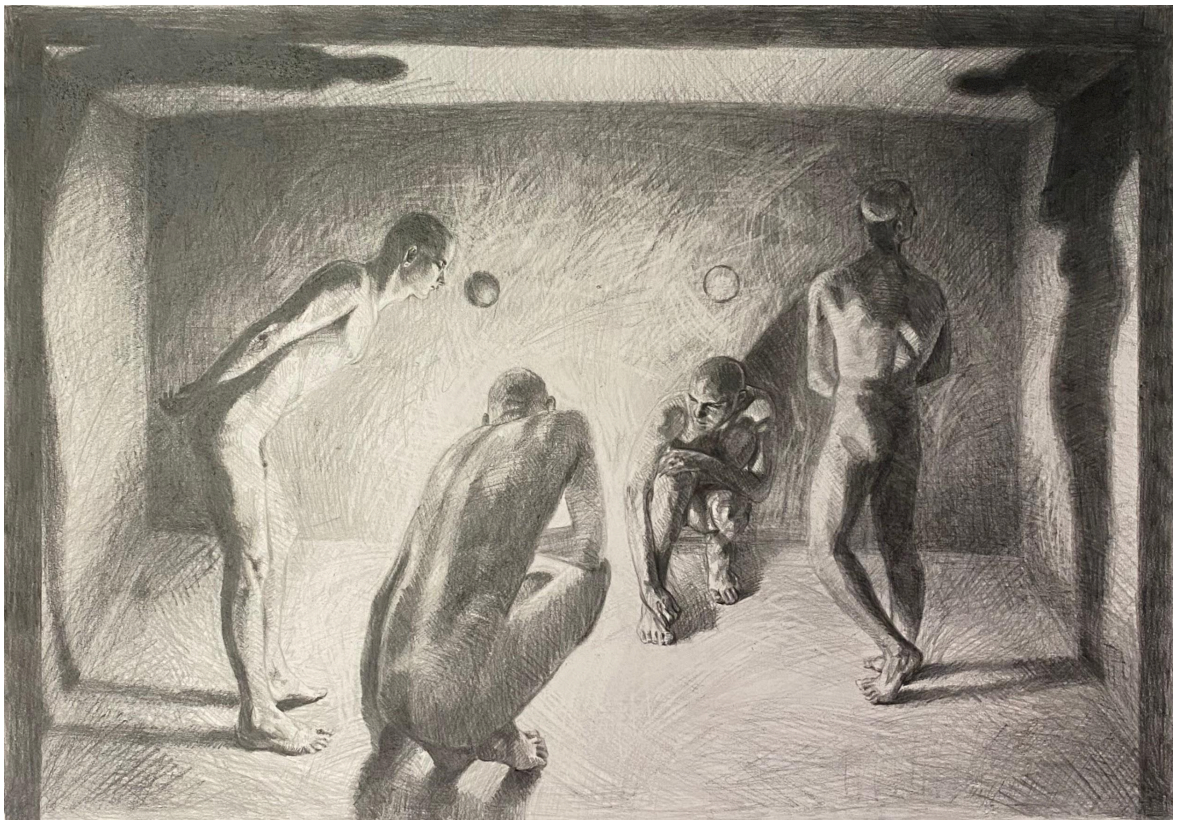
Holding Objects by Isabella Maroon

Holding Objects by Isabella Maroon

Funeral Rites of a Right Arm by Alex McGady

The Spiral Continues Where the Cycle Ends by Alex McGady

The Growth and Appearance of Two Odds by Alex McGady



The Space’s Light Emerged and Darkness Emboldened by Alex McGady

“Your Smile” by Kunal Moudgil

Have I told you what it means to me
What it means to be next to you
In the morn, or eve, or in theaters when you’re dozed, or on my couch the same
Or when you refrain, from giving me a piece of your mind
Or when with those kind eyes you comfort me
Or when you display your juvenile charm
With your sticking tongue and wrinkled nose
You’ve come so close – to me

Have I told you what it means -
To wake up with you?
Sunshine peering through
The blossoming cheek to cheek
It owns my sleep, my dreams too

My day begins with thoughts of you
And ends the same

Oh, but you are to blame for my newfound forgetfulness
My newfound absentmindedness
As I walked in that day, you with a smile on your face and a cabernet in your hand,
You gently took that which belonged to me
That which I claimed so proudly mine and kept safe for years is henceforth yours

And I with it, surrender unto you

“Unnamed” by Kounal Moudgil

Your lips they part as if to welcome mine
That cheek to cheek sunshine of a smile
The kindness in those cherub eyes
The wrinkle on that playful nose
The soft lashes as your eyes close

Sing to me
Promise me of beautiful things to be
Of spring flowers and butterflies
Of love and compromise

As you gently put your hands in mine
I put my faith in you

“V-day Blessing” by Kunal Moudgil

When the man upstairs looks down each morn

He’s looking first for you dear

And when you smile, through the vibrant sun he’s smiling back at you dear

In my fantasies I like to think I make you giddy each morning

And so I rest assured the brightness in the sky is perhaps because of my presence in your life

Cuz your presence in mine has made me a better me, has given me a reason to be happy each day

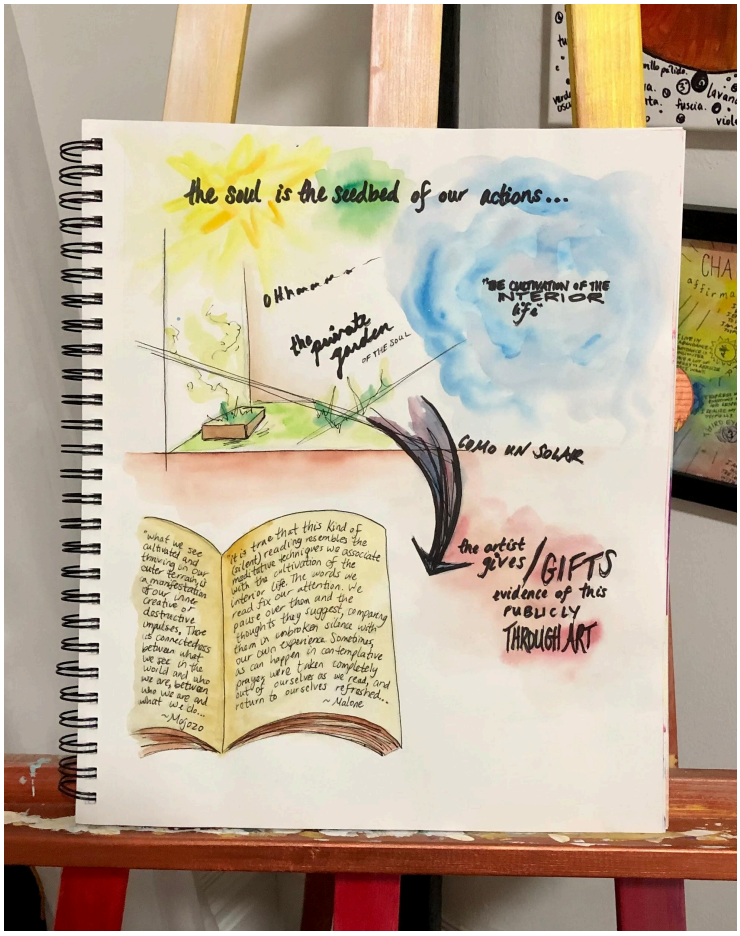
Your loving words, birthing in your soul, spoken through your cherub eyes, as your lips stay unmoved have spoken many promises to me,

And I, your humble lover will keep my promises too

And through thick and thin, come storm or calm, will hold your right in my left, safely in my “tweed” pocket

This Valentine’s I am glad you’re mine and I promise to be yours forever

What Counts? by Clare Murray


the soul is the seedbed of our actions...
the private garden
OF THE SOUL
"BE CULTIVATION OF THE INTERIOR LIFE"
the artist gives
GIFTS
evidence of this
PUBLICLY
THROUGH ART
"what we are cultivated and tending in our outer terrain is a manifestation of our inner creative or destructive impulses. There is connectedness between what we are in the world and who we are, between who we are and what we do..."
~Mayzo
"It is true that this kind of (silent) reading resembles the most festive communion with the cultivation of the interior life. The words we read fix our attention. We pause over them and the thought is they suggest, comparing them in unbroken silence with our own experience. Sometimes, as can happen in contemplative prayer, we're taken completely out of ourselves as we read, and return to ourselves refreshed..."
~Malone

The Soul is the Seedbed by Clare Murray

Meditation on Making Marks with Watercolor

By Clare Murray

Go ahead, I dare you.

Settle in, pick up your brush.

Notice, just notice.

Wonder, how does it feel?

Make your mark, let the water carry it forth.

“Hey you!” between squiggles, mixed media, 12x24” by Clare Murray

24 by Meli Nava

Sola by Meli Nava

Pandemic Pussy by Taylor Peterson

Cats are truly ridiculous creatures but I'm so lucky I found this one in 2020. Her name is Ophelia and I FaceTimed with her foster mom to see her kittens but saw her lurking in the background. The vet called her 'petite' and she bites a lot and has decorated my hands and forearms with scratches since I brought her home in April, but she also loves laying on my belly, and as such has replaced my need for the weighted blanket that I bought last winter. She has little ear wisps at the tip of her ears and likes playing with garbage.

Early Days by Taylor Peterson

Old Man Oph by Taylor Peterson

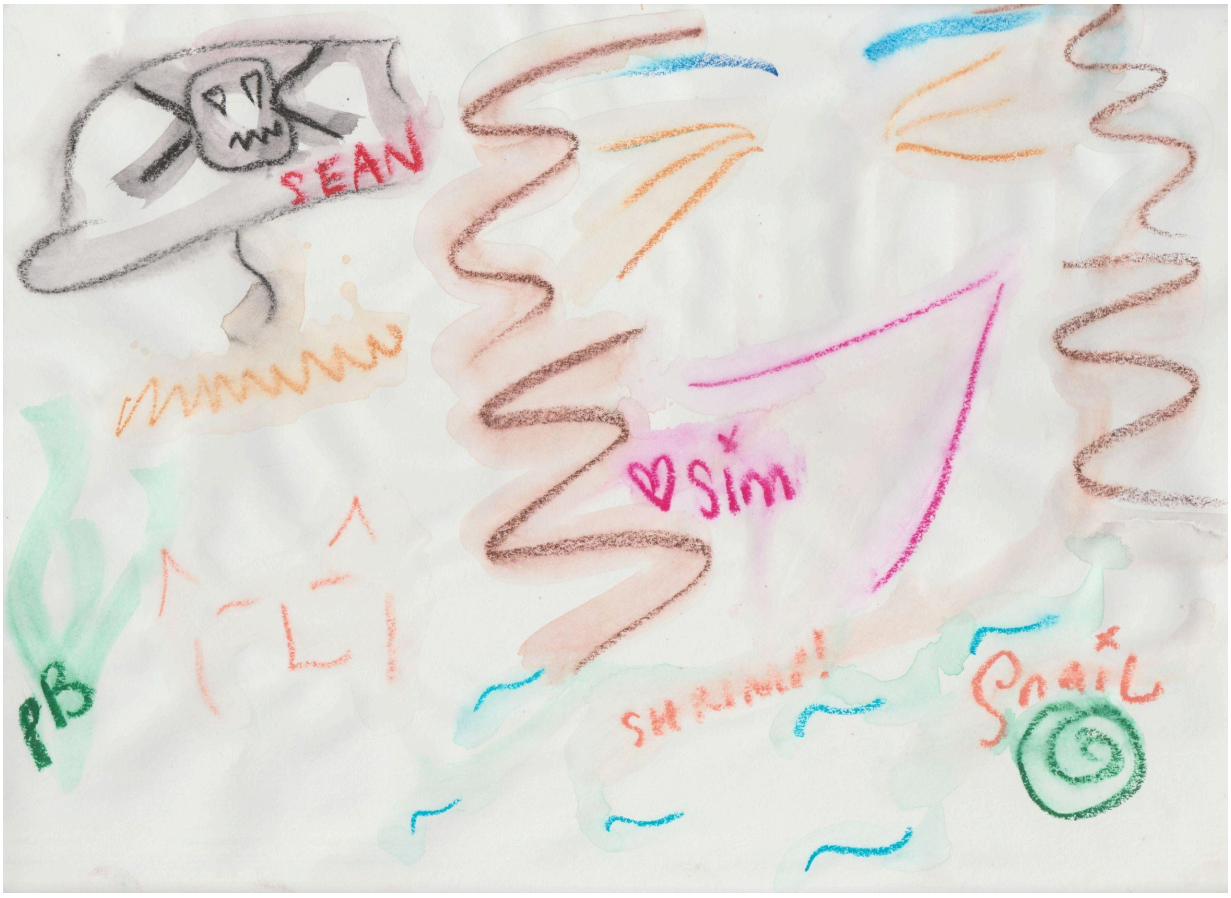
Ma petite fille by Taylor Peterson

Family Portrait by Taylor Peterson

Regal by Taylor Peterson

Loaf by Taylor Peterson

Portraits of my Pals: Ophelia and Me by Taylor Peterson



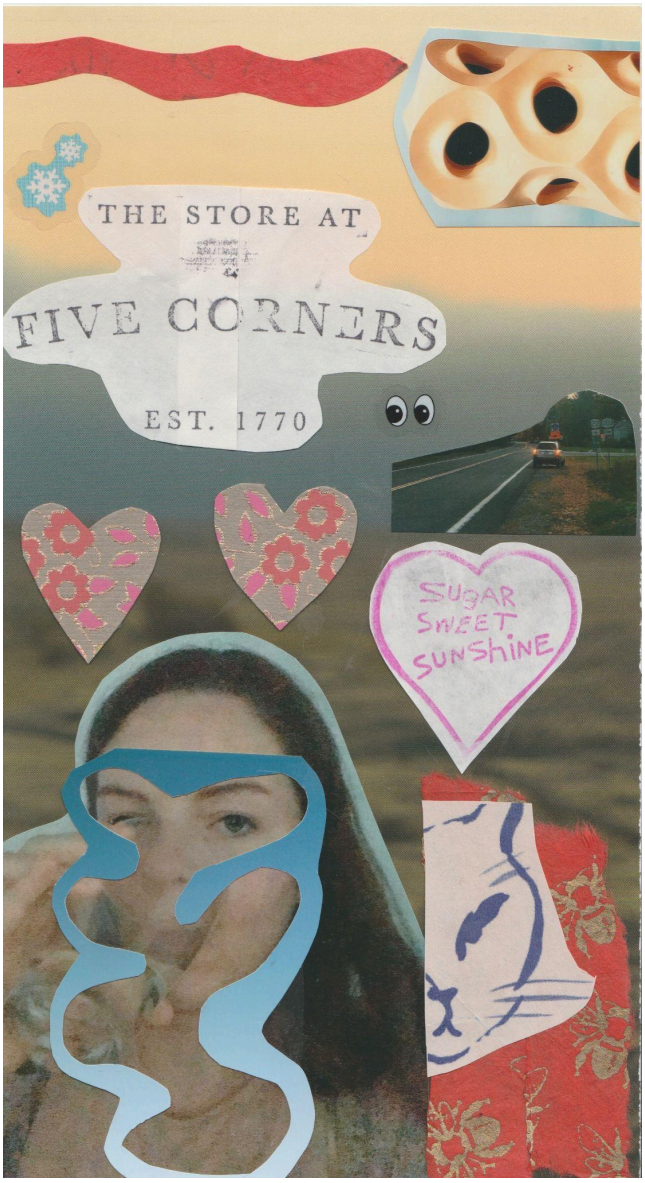
Portraits of my Pals: Sean & Sim, PB & Shrimp & Snail by Taylor Peterson

Portraits of my Pals: Kira by Taylor Peterson

Portraits of my Pals: Jacqueline by Taylor Peterson

Portraits of my Pals: Lij, Jelly, and Nelda by Taylor Peterson

Portraits of my Pals: Howard & Ziggy by Taylor Peterson



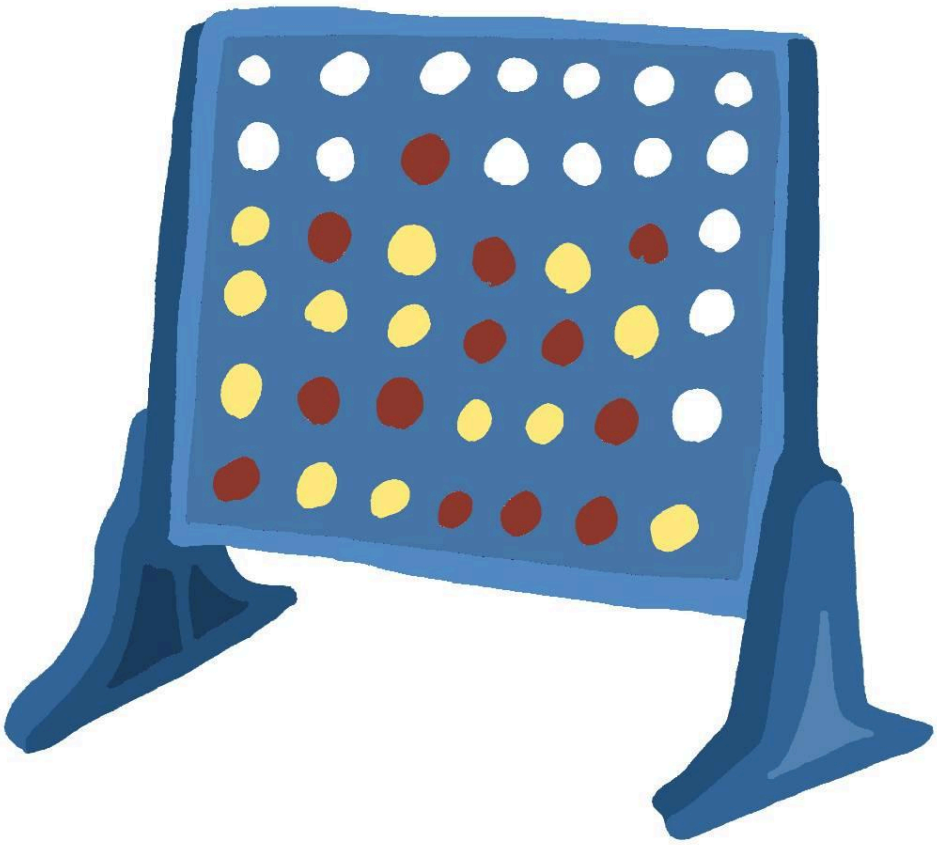
Things I Miss by Taylor Peterson

Water by Steve Rose

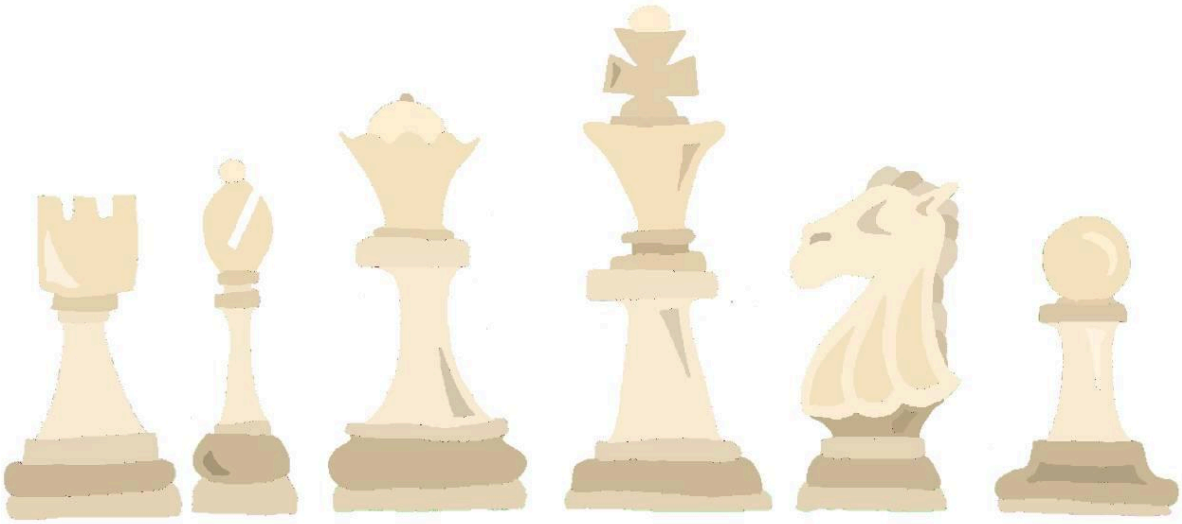
Skull/Jolly Roger by Steve Rose

Skull by Steve Rose

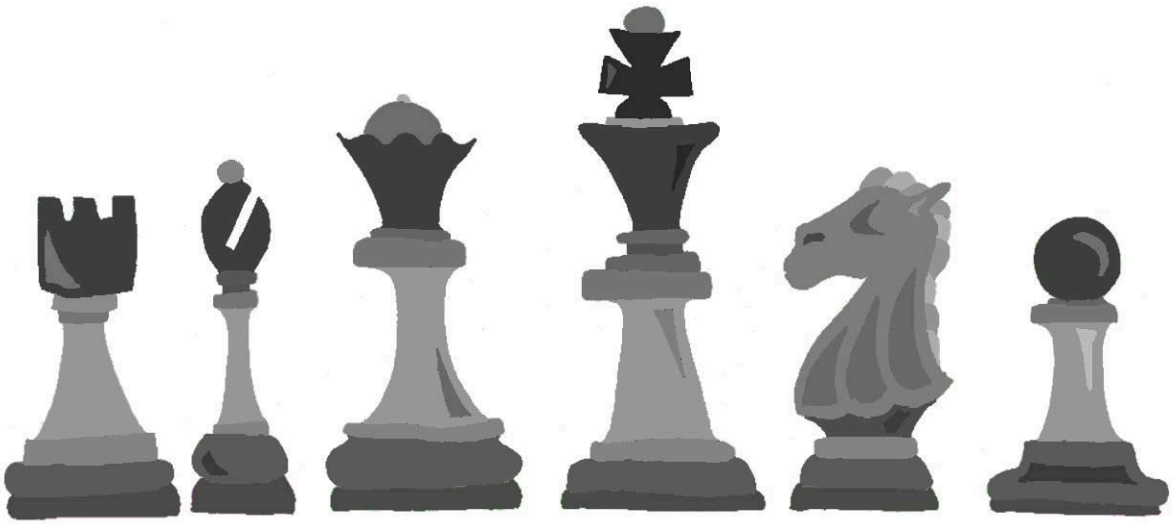
Untitled (Skull) by Steve Rose



Connect 4 by Ray Seebeck

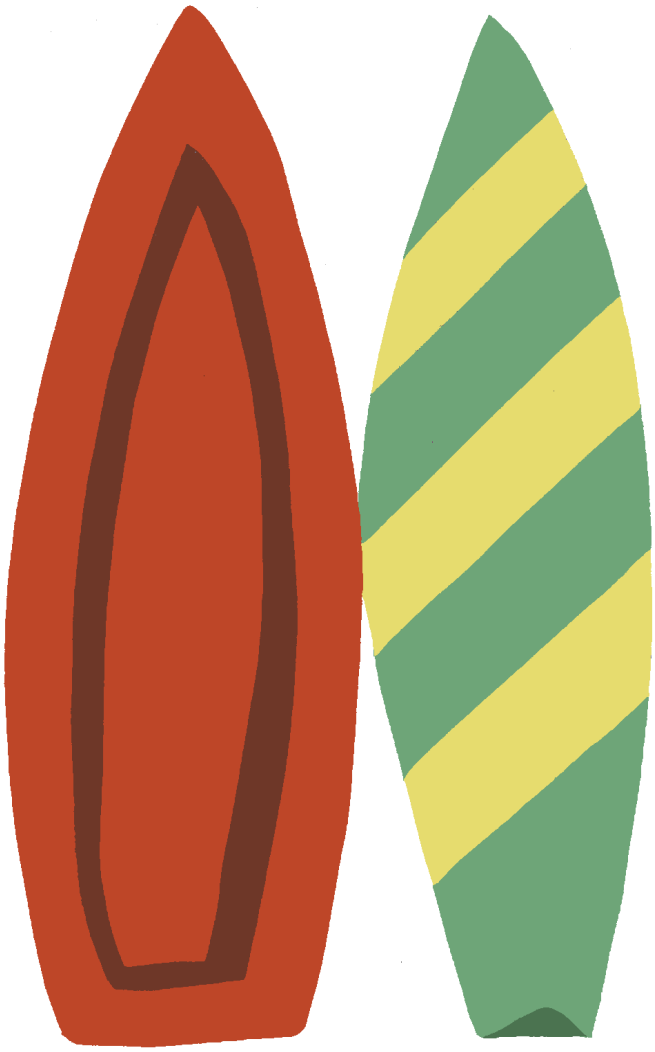


Chess by Ray Seebeck



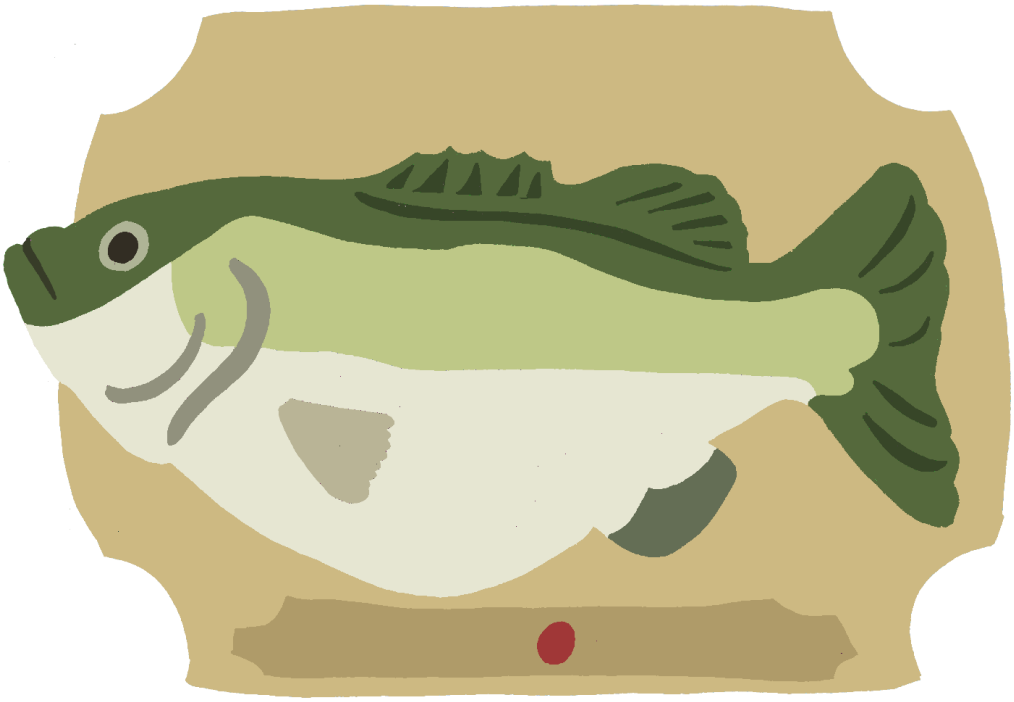
Chess by Ray Seebeck

Dollhouse by Ray Seebeck



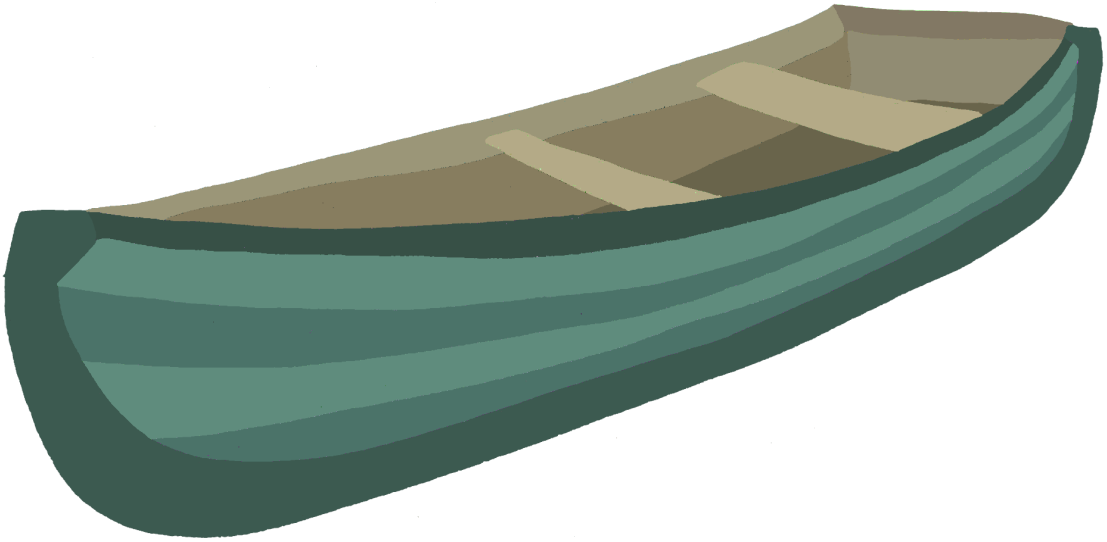
Surfboards by Ray Seebeck

Great Wave by Ray Seebeck

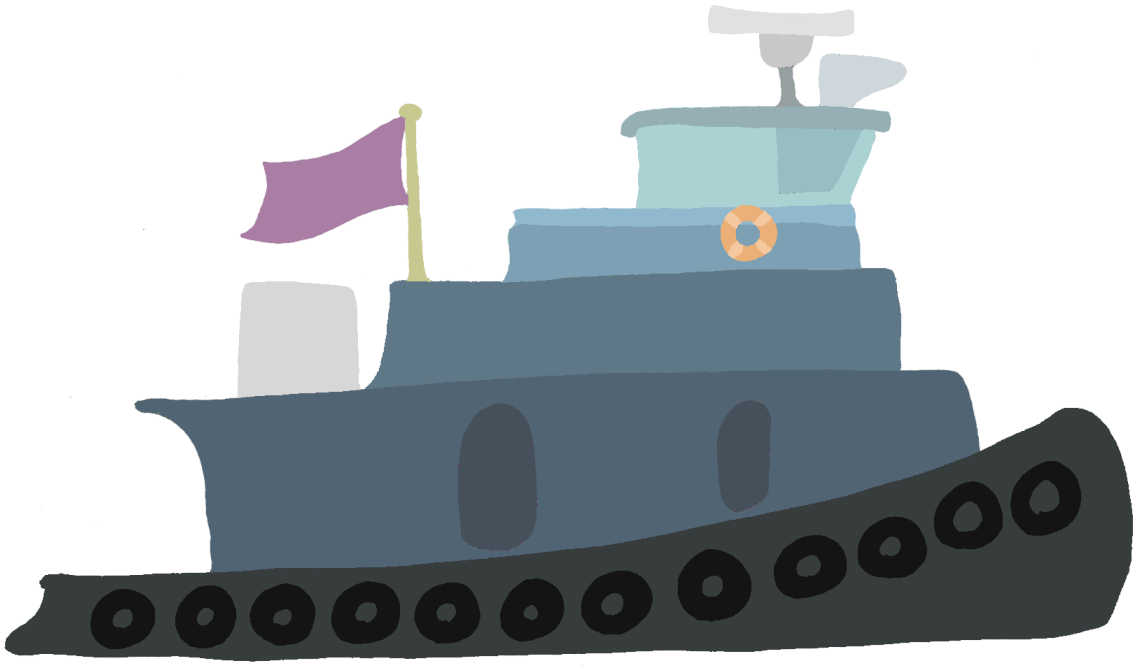


Don't Worry Be Happy by Ray Seebeck

Manta Ray by Ray Seebeck

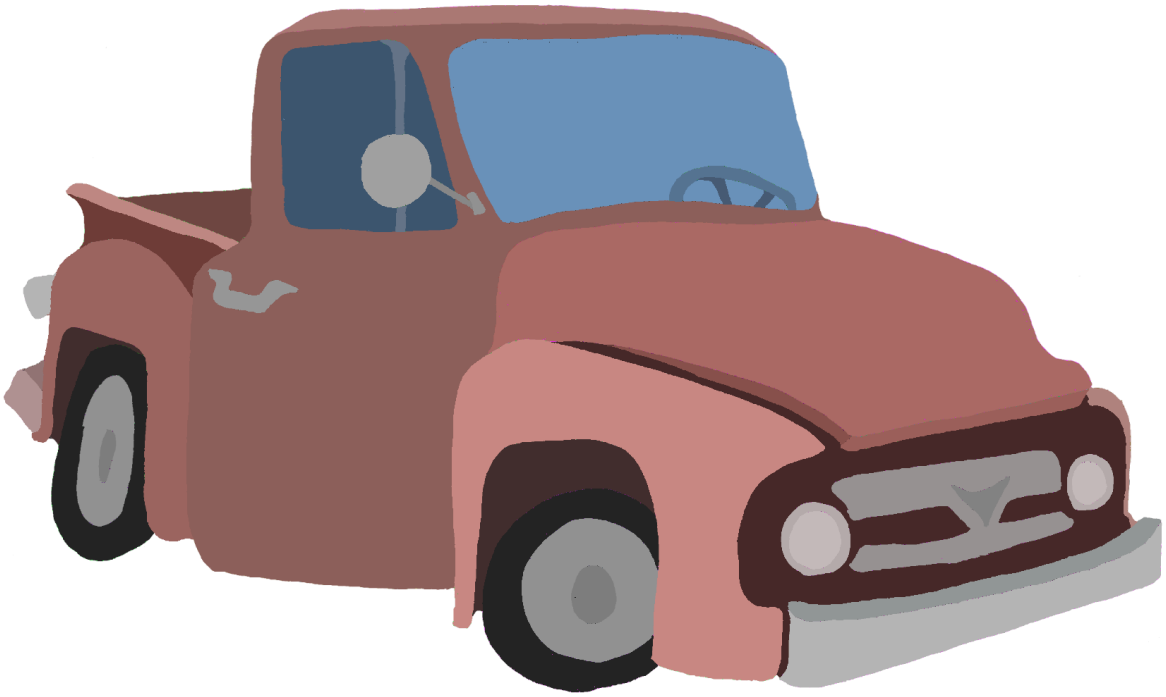


Painted Wood Boat by Ray Seebeck



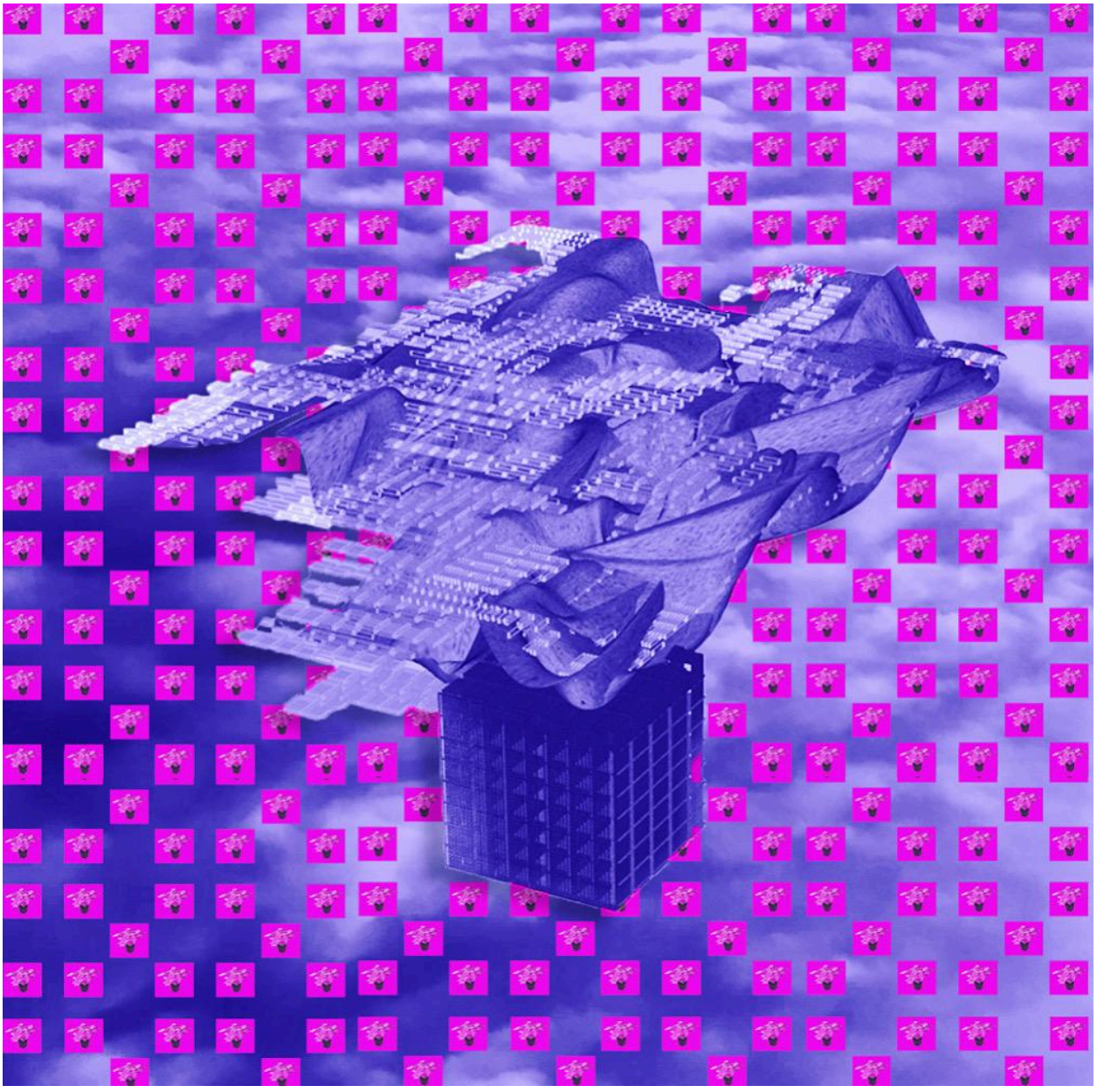
Tugboat by Ray Seebeck

Hermit Crab by Ray Seebeck

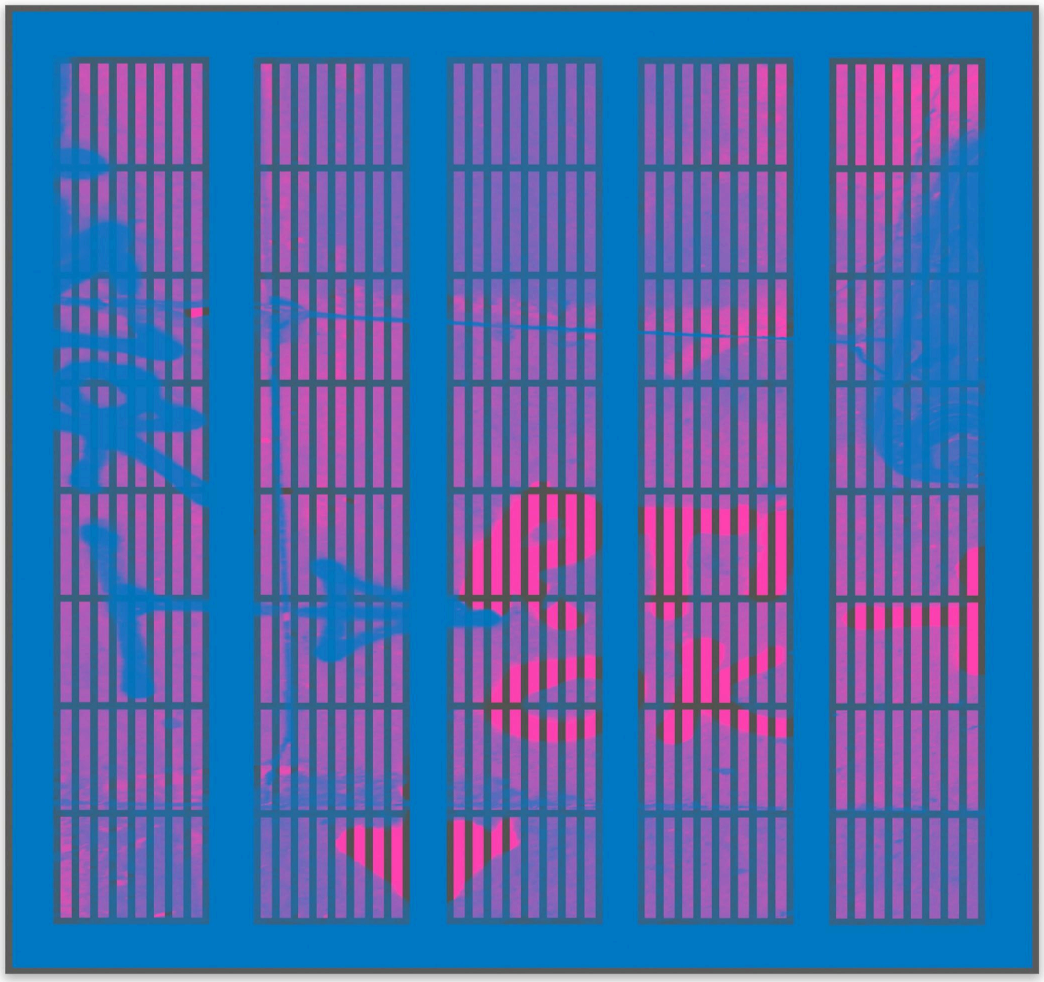


Truck print by Ray Seebeck

Owl print by Ray Seebeck



Exceeds Consumption Limits by Natalie Slater



Utility: Property & Water By Natalie Slater

Midwest Classification by Natalie Slater

Dreams by Annabel Smith

Nia Terro by Annabel Smith

Vines by Annabel Smith

Leave the Windows to the Rain by Libby Smith

You taught me to listen to the lullabies on the window panes.
When we drew moonlight along the hardwood floorboards
you etched rain into your skin. I let the lilies touch my lips.
We were relieved to leave all the windows open to the rain.

When we drew moonlight along the hardwood floorboards
you taught me to shift grey to blue within me. *All the love in you*.
We sighed when all the windows opened. We reached for
sweet river stones and kissed them. We tasted their marrow.

You taught me to shift grey to blue. *Feel for the love in you.*
There is a light in you, you drew. Rain etched into skin.
I picked up a sweet river stone. And sucked up its marrow
as we lay on the floorboards. Colors erupted from our skin.

There is a light in you, you drew. You etched rain into skin.
You taught me how to spell *blue*, how to prolong its warmth
as we lay on the floorboards. Colors erupted from our skin.
Naturally, I carved *c-l-a-r-i-t-y* into the soft honeyed wood.

We Have So Much Time by Libby Smith

Tamara tells me to enjoy my tea with milk. Pull up my sleeves, tie my boots, and take a sip while she whispers with wonder to *look up—rarely do we look up.*

There we are. Youthful—together—settled in a reverie. Settled among clouds of purity. We float with each inhale and pour more tea from ourselves. I look at Tamara, a river of innocence. I notice the smooth surface of her skin and remember: we have so much time.

Smoky mountain meadow by Joe Starling

After it all:
lonely months, moments of near-clarity,
the ordering of hours in a line;
desperate music
swallowed by echoless walls;
outside, a cardinal
tapping the window –

After it all,
you and I will play checkers
with bright gold pieces
that tumble to the dirt.

Water green by Joe Starling

A spot where dirt
and cool water stir.

Reeds spiral up,
only to thin and grow old –
bird-wings that flash gold,
a whip to strike breeze aside.

Water lies clean with eel grass
under the surface
still as moss,
if moss were
to boil when it rained
or cloud itself
when a fish flew by.

Watching from afar,
it is tempting to toss a sharp rock
and make the loch shatter:
fish scatter
grass waves.

Pitch by Joe Starling

Water-rind –
wrinkled film, plastic-like.

A sunfish flier surfaces sideways and stays,
heaving atop the slick.

The sun beats but no fin
can crack a pond
so dark the light comes back.

“Nixie” by Joe Starling

The sea was a bedroom,
no shame beneath rain curtains –
all was closed
in many pairs of circling arms.

“11:59” by Joe Starling

(excerpt)

Twist time into a coiled spring:
when you and I are at home
by the window, I can rest
against your chest and
hours will shrivel up,
become small and drip down the glass,
joining with hours at the sill
for us to call a day.

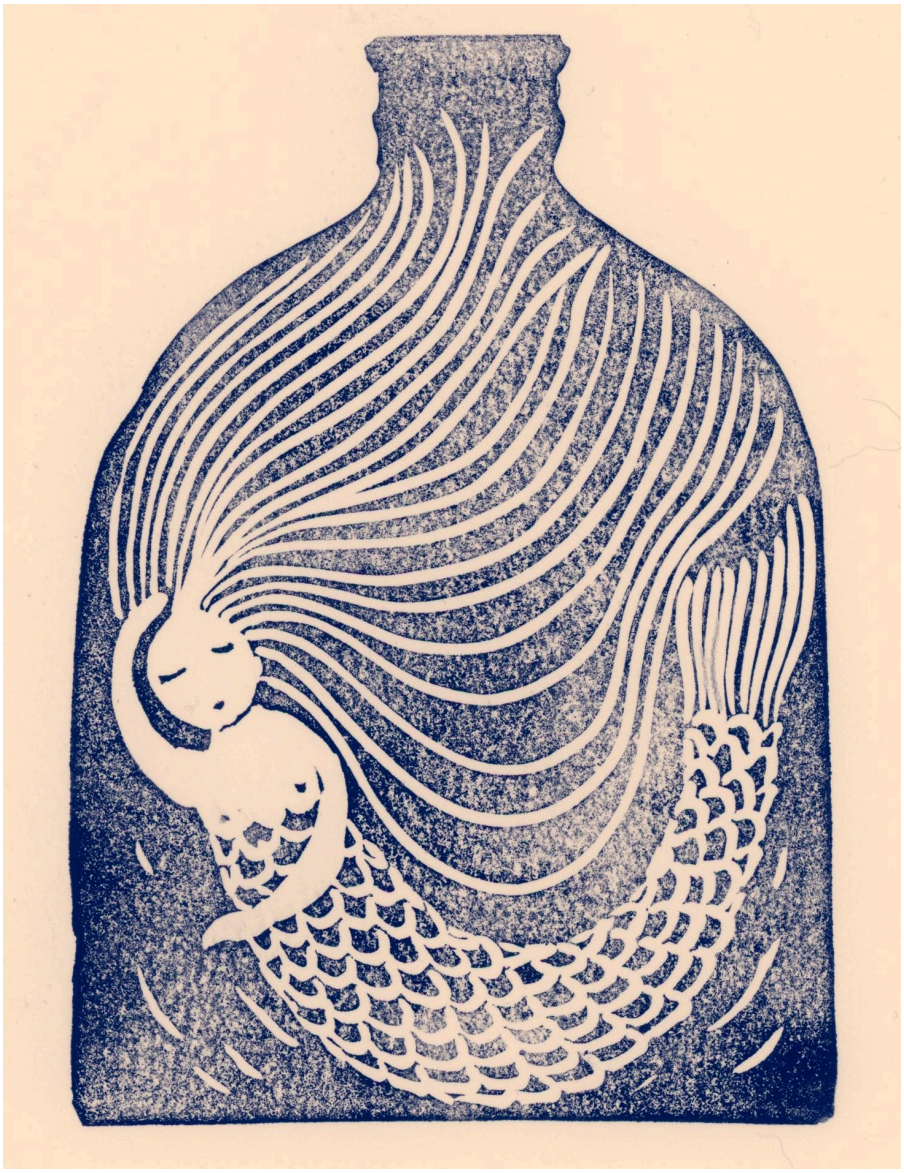
Peel A Scale
Joe Starling

Over a year and I wait still
for my turn-ankle driveway to reconstitute,
to lead past velluntine grass and mollasc stones
where tongues of celosia lash in a dumb wind.

Some tread the worm-road that guides the side door,
mounting mounds of prostrationary moss to open
the clouded window of the basement,
their stroking fingernail a key to glass.

Goose flesh:
in time, the interior path repairs with callusing clay
rousing raw from the break to firm in the sunlight,
blushing red.

Horse in Grass by Kristina Swarner



Mermaid Blue by Kristina Swarner

At the Bottom of the Sea by Kristina Swarner

Night Voyage by Kristina Swarner

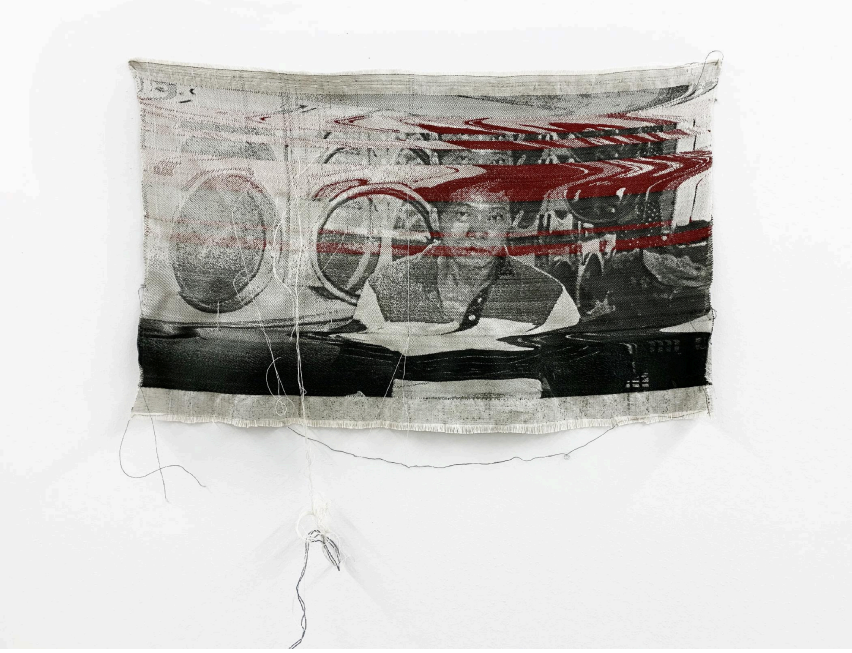
Murmuration
Kristina Swarner

The old floorboards creak
beneath my feet, I try to step
on the quiet ones.

Then I think, they once were trees;
this is their only way to speak.

10”x10” gouache and gold leaf painting on wood panel

Kỷ Niệm Ngày Cưới (Red & Gold) by Thuong Tran



Grandfather at the Laundromat by Thuong Tran

Grandfather's Album by Thuong Tran

Uncle Thuy II by Thuong Tran

Thao Minh Tran textile by Thuong Tran

Thao Minh Tran (detail 1) textile by Thuong Tran

Thao Minh Tran (detail 2) textile by Thuong Tran

Thao Minh Tran (detail 3) textile by Thuong Tran

Tension by Spencer Tweedy

I believe in a certain type of internal tension.
A coiled-up-edness, a holding of energy inside.
On the surface, that would seem like it leads to tenseness—a rigid way of doing things, a lack of grace.
But I think it actually enables grace. It's this stored up energy, this state of trying, that allows us to meet our commitments, to move our bodies fluidly, to make the art we want to make.
I've never been sure whether this tension is a symptom of a neurosis or if it's just a healthy being-in-tune with something fundamental. Of course I'm partial to it and so I feel like it's the latter. But I admit there might be a compulsive element to it—some fear lurking beneath the surface.
After all, my desire to be coiled up with energy is superstitious. The counterpart to the positive idea that this tension enables grace is the negative idea that letting go of this tension—letting go—would mean losing the ability to act gracefully, or losing talent, losing something. The tension feels like something that should never be given up. That's what makes it tension!
And yes, sometimes it grows into tenseness, if the fear of letting go becomes too great, or the paths to manifesting your energy are blocked. In those moments (and all the moments in between), I try to remind myself that it's good to be lighthearted—to chill out.
But most of the time, this tension isn't a burden; it's satisfying. It feels good to have this energy, and to channel it into things.
Here's one lofty way to look at it: humans swim upstream against entropy. The forces of the universe are constantly trying to break all matter into simpler forms, to spread everything out. But we, with our complicated bodies and even more complicated minds, subvert that. All that work is hard. It takes energy. All the better to keep some at the ready. To be roiling and sizzling inside.

“Summer Reflections” by Spencer Tweedy

When Chicago's at its coldest, or my body's at its sickest, I think of summer and of the beach. And I can't believe how impossibly far away they feel, that I ever could have felt them before.

Then, when it's warm again, and I'm healthy again, and I'm feeling the sun, I think of the cold and of illness. Then *they* feel far away too.

In elementary school and high school, I would often get headaches. I could try to hide from work and stay as inert as possible. But a funny thing would happen around recess time. I would head with my class to the playground and start running around, the blood pumping in my head. I could feel my pulse. I would feel awful. Then I wouldn't. Moving would have forced the pain away. I could move to feel better. If only more pains worked that way.

Summer used to make me melancholy. It made me think of the moments before bedtime, when there was no more time left with which to have fun. Forcing the brain off, lying in bed. The time told on the VCR set atop the cabinet in our living room: 8:00 PM in red, digital numbers. The sun would still be setting; the cicadas would be buzzing. Air hot, air humid. Later, summer tangled with puberty too. It reminded me of older kids doing drugs or hurting themselves, or getting caught giving each other handjobs in the forest. So, then, summer made me feel scared too.

Now, I'm grateful for it. At a minimum, as a relief from winter responsibilities: tending to snow and ice, even fixing roof leaks. But more than that: the summer air again. Hot and humid, again. Remembering childhood. Tasting the sweetness of then (and now) instead of the unknown. It helps that now I set my own bedtime.

Ungrace

Spencer Tweedy

Here's how I used to think.

Don't jam things. Don't force them.

Don't waste your energy on ideas you're not sure will work out. Life is too short. There's too much to do. Look for solutions that seem surefire.

Get a good grip on whatever you're handling. Wind up for it. Get your body in the right position.

Be graceful, always. Avoid doing *anything* that will make you fall on your ass, show your ass, break your ass.

Well, dear Anthology reader, that way of thinking served me well. But it's not the whole picture, and I see that now.

Last winter I watched my studiomate, Jason, install an illuminated exit sign on a ceiling. The mounting bracket for the exit sign was the wrong size for the electrical box we had. The screw holes didn't line up. They were just barely off.

My inclination: Go to the store, buy the right bracket. "Do it right."

Jason's solution: Jam that motherfucking screw in there in case there's a chance it'll find the hole.

I looked on with fear, awe, and, I'll admit, a little bit of judgement. Not "you're so stupid" judgement, but mild, loving, "I don't think this will work" judgement. More than anything, I was surprised he even *wanted* to try that solution. It seemed so frustrating, so unlikely to work. And yet it did.

And the exit sign was sturdy. It wasn't a crappy, compromising solution. It just really worked. And I know Jason wouldn't have settled for it if it were.

And it was a better solution, because we saved money and time.

This put my world on a tilt. The stakes were low with the exit sign, to be sure, but it had me wondering: What other solutions have I avoided or failed to discover altogether because I've been so averse to jamming things, trying them, tolerating uncertainty? Looking foolish? Surely many of them.

In short, I wasn't trying hard enough. But it was a particularly insidious type of not trying hard enough, because it *felt* like trying the hardest. To refuse messy solutions in favor of holding out for neat, tidy ones felt like the responsible, effortful thing to do. But in too many cases, it meant procrastination. Our minds are mischievous. I think mine really just wanted to avoid sweating, being unsure, and being slightly out of control.

It showed me the *ungraceful* can be OK. Sometimes, it's even a path to grace. And if someone sees your ass, who cares?

Masking It by Jamie Willock

It's been hard in different ways. But I haven't let it beat me.

I learned what a mask was this year. I really learned. Whether it be to walk into my favorite coffee shop asking for an overpriced bag of beans. Whether it be running alongside my favorite person's dog. Whether it be standing by while shooting an overpriced tv show on a studio lot in the valley.

It's hard to tell what people are feeling when they're guarded by a mask. I can't tell if they're sad. Frustrated. Comical. Maybe even young or old. Insecure. Jaded.

But we're all wearing masks. It's something each and every one of us needs to do. The world needs to heal, and that's just something we can't dismiss if she'll get better. And you can tell a lot about a person based on their mask. The detail, the subtle designs. Whether it be an N-95 or just a simple bandana.

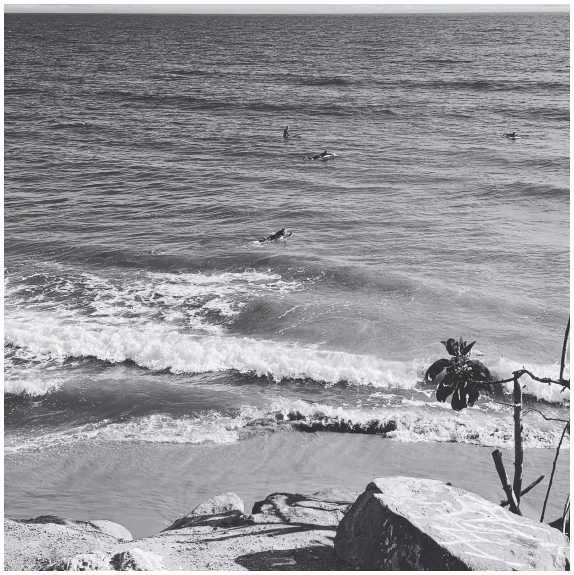
It's easy to say the mask has prevented us from 'having a year.' That we missed a year. But the world is what you make it regardless of pandemic or not. I've cherished the friendships I've made or continued this year and have let behind others deemed hostile. I've run. I've surfed. I've read. I've written. I've worked. I just haven't fucking let it beat me.

I've learned so much about myself this year. I've learned that I get sad. A subtle but can be overwhelming sadness. It doesn't need a reason. It's just sadness. I am not alone in this regard. I've had this pandemic much less stressful than others, and I am thankful for that. I haven't lost anyone terribly close to me. I have the ability to go outside to sun every day.

For the first time in a while, I'm excited. I'm excited at the thought of taking off my mask to smile. A mask that not only keeps in scruff but my emotions. We will watch the world heal, and I will be there for it. I just never let it beat me, and I'm ready to see what's next.

“Medicine” by Jamie Willock

It’s violent, it’s unrelenting, it’s ferocious, it’s unnerving. It will toss and turn you like a rag-doll. You’ll exit with cut up feet and bruises on your back. You’ll get yelled at by others in the water. You’ll get up, you’ll fall. You’ll even struggle to get out past the break. But if there’s anything out there. Anything in the world at all that acts as the best medicine to daily life. It is surfing in the Pacific.



Once Upon A Time…
Jamie Willock

…there was a boy. Not any different from the rest. Didn't look wildly different. Didn't act wildly different. Not quite wild & different.

He was given everything. Love, education, friends, family. He wasn't a trouble maker. He was good in the classroom. He got by.

He traveled. He read. He played outside. Most importantly, he laughed.

As he grew older, still confined to his home-town, he struggled to laugh. Nothing quite felt funny to him anymore. He was growing up. People never told him that the more you grow up, the harder it is to laugh.

That was until he ran away. He hustled. He met friends. He found love.

The older he grew, the less he worried about running away and the harder he ran. Most importantly, he began to laugh again. Once Upon a Time… there was a boy.

Youre Doing it Right by Sara Wright

I Have No Idea What I'm Doing by Sara Wright

Jacqueline Augenbraun, Christian Bañez, Mireille Blond, Keenan Boscoe, Sharone Conteh-Morgan, Kalven Duncan, Nadeige Fontaine, Quincy Gregg, Kimberly Ha, Julia Hagen, Hannah Hwang, Cristiaan Jackson, Kira Jackson, Sun Kawazoe, Tae Kim, Ben Kim Paplham, Grace Tenneh Kromah, Samantha Laite, Freddie Lambright III, Braimah Temitayo Lawal, Esther Mathieu, Isabella Maroon, Alex McGady, Kunal Moudgil, Clare Murray, Meli Nava, Taylor Peterson, Steve Rose, Ray Seebeck, Natalie Slater, Annabel Smith, Libby Smith, Joe Starling, Kristina Swarner, Thuong Tran, Spencer Tweedy, Jamie Willock, Sara Wright